

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2014-022
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2014-016)**

UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

In *In Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee*, 794 So. 2d 518 (Fla. 2001), the Florida Supreme Court endorsed the creation of a unified family court system in the circuit courts of Florida. The Court’s concept of “one family, one judge” or “one family, one team” to coordinate multiple cases involving one family was expected to improve the resolution of disputes within the judicial system for children and families. Since 2001, this circuit has implemented various strategies to improve the resolution of disputes involving children and families.

In *In re Amendments to the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration and In re Amendments to the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure*, 39 Fla. L. Weekly S25 (January 16, 2014), the Florida Supreme Court adopted Rule 12.003 which requires that all related family cases must be handled before one judge “unless impractical.” Although the implementation of a “one family, one judge” approach may present challenges, we now implement the “one family, one judge” concept in accordance with the most recent decision of the Florida Supreme Court.

By the power vested in the chief judge under article V, section 2(d), Florida Constitution; section 43.26, Florida Statutes; and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2), it is therefore **ORDERED**:

1. Unified Family Court Division

For purposes of this administrative order, “Unified Family Court Division” means any of the following divisions of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit:

Subject Matter Division	Letter
Domestic Relations / Family Law	A
Domestic Relations / Family Law	B
Domestic Relations / Family Law	C
Domestic Relations / Family Law	D
Domestic Relations / Family Law	E
Domestic Relations / Family Law	F

Domestic Relations / Family Law	I
Domestic Relations / Family Law (East)	R
Domestic Relations / Family Law (East)	T
Title IV-D Child Support	Y
Domestic Violence	G
Domestic Violence	H
Domestic Violence (East)	S
Domestic Violence (East)	V
Juvenile Delinquency	A
Juvenile Delinquency	B
Juvenile Delinquency	F
Juvenile Drug Court	E
Juvenile Dependency	C
Juvenile Dependency	D
Juvenile Dependency	S
Independent Living Transition Services	I
Dependency Drug Court	J
Delinquency-Dependency Crossover	M
Dependency Specialty	V

2. Unified Family Court Cases

All judges assigned to Unified Family Court Divisions will preside over “family cases” involving a single family in accordance with this administrative order, including but not limited to: dissolution of marriage; annulment; support unconnected with dissolution of marriage; paternity; child support; UIFSA; custodial care of and access to children; proceedings for temporary or concurrent custody of minor children by extended family; adoption; name change; declaratory judgment actions related to premarital, marital, or postmarital agreements; civil domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual violence injunctions; juvenile dependency; termination of parental rights; juvenile delinquency; emancipation of a minor; CINS/FINS; truancy; and modification and enforcement of orders entered in these cases.

3. Notice of Related Cases Form

In accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d), petitioners in all Unified Family Court Divisions, except the Domestic Relations / Family Law Divisions, must complete and file a Notice of Related Cases form in conformity with Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(h) if any related cases are pending and known or reasonably ascertainable.

Petitioners in the Domestic Relations / Family Law Divisions must complete and file a Notice of Related Cases form in conformity with Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(h) even if there are no related cases.

In accordance with Rule 2.545(d)(4), the petitioner must file the Notice in each of the related cases that are currently open and pending with the court. **The petitioner must serve the Notice on: (a) all other parties in each of the related cases; (b) the respective presiding division judges; and (c) the administrative judge of the Unified Family Court.**

The Clerk of the Circuit Court (“clerk”) will provide Notice of Related Cases forms and instructions for completion to all petitioners or their attorneys in all Unified Family Court Divisions.

4. Administrative Judge Duties

Upon service of a Notice of Related Cases form on the Administrative Judge of the Unified Family Court, the administrative judge will determine if it is practical to transfer or consolidate the related family cases. If the administrative judge determines that it is practical to transfer or consolidate two or more related family cases, the administrative judge will enter an order transferring or consolidating the related family cases and specifying which Unified Family Court Division will hear the cases. If the administrative judge determines that it is impractical to transfer or consolidate related family cases, the administrative judge will enter an order giving a reason for such determination.

The administrative judge of the Unified Family Court is the final arbiter on whether related family cases involving the same parties or children should be transferred or consolidated to one division.

The administrative judge of the Unified Family Court will be assisted in the judge’s duties under this administrative order by the clerk and by the court’s Case Management Unit.

5. Inconsistent Provisions of Other Administrative Orders

If any provisions of this administrative order are inconsistent with the provisions of any other administrative order, the provisions of this administrative order control.

6. Previous Administrative Order Superseded

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2014-016
(*Unified Family Court*).

7. Effective Date

This administrative order is effective April 1, 2014.

It is ORDERED in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, on this 27th day
of March, 2014.



Manuel Menendez, Jr., Chief Judge

Original to: Pat Frank, Clerk of Court

Copy to: All Unified Family Court Division Judges

Hillsborough County Bar Association, Marital & Family Law Section